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AUTHOR Bredeson, Paul V.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that investigated the instructional leadership roles of superintendents in school districts in a large midwestern state. Specifically, the paper examines the relationships among superintendents' descriptions of their involvement in curriculum-development and instructional-leadership activities in their districts and salient personal, professional, and work variables. A questionnaire of 397 superintendents in 1 state elicited 326 responses. Respondents described their roles in curriculum development as primarily grounded in facilitation, support, and delegation of work. Four major instructional-leadership roles were identified--the instructional visionary, instructional collaborator, instructional supporter, and instructional delegator. Most superintendents spent little time in curriculum development. Time constraints, role overload, the press of other priorities, and lack of personal interest in curriculum and instruction tended to confine the majority of superintendents to collaboration, support, and delegation as the major forms of involvement in curriculum development. The data also suggest that superintendents responded to role expectations within their districts, which emphasize accountability for managerial processes over teaching and learning outcomes. It is suggested that superintendents demonstrate interest in curriculum development as a primary administrative responsibility, that school boards recognize and reward curricular leadership, and that administrator-preparation programs place priority on teaching and learning. Eleven tables are included. (Contains 16 references.) (LMI)

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SUPERINTENDENTS' ROLES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: INSTRUCTIONAL VISIONARIES, COLLABORATORS, SUPPORTERS, AND DELEGATORS

Paul V. Bredeson
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Rationale

The role of the American school superintendent has undergone numerous changes over the last 150 years. The superintendent was once considered to be the instructional leader and teacher of teachers in the school district. Today the work of superintendents has increasingly become defined by political pressures, high public visibility, unstable school finances, and greater external controls exerted through court rulings, legislation, and state department of education mandates. With time as a limited resource, the more time needed to deal with everything from budgets to buses, the less time there is for issues related to teaching and learning. Responding to changing work place realities, professional preparation programs for superintendents emphasize management tasks over issues of instruction and learning. Thus, for survival in many cases, superintendents have delegated the technical core, curriculum and instruction, to others -- teachers and principals. As a result, superintendents often find themselves legitimating their curriculum involvement more through rhetoric than through real involvement.

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings from an empirical investigation of the instructional leadership roles of superintendents in school districts in a large midwestern state. Specifically, the paper examines the relationships between superintendents' self-descriptions of their involvement in curriculum development and instructional leadership activities in their districts and salient personal, professional, and work variables. Based on these self-descriptions, the study goes on to examine the relationship between metaphors for superintendent instructional leadership and personal characteristics, professional background and training, role priorities, time allocation to major work tasks, sources of role influence,

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and job satisfaction.

The primary research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How do superintendents describe their work as educational leaders?
2. What do superintendents mean when they say they are involved in curriculum and instruction?
3. Do superintendents' descriptions of their involvement in curriculum development and instruction suggest identifiable role types for superintendents as instructional leaders?
4. If there are identifiable role types, are there significant differences in salient personal, professional, and work characteristics among instructional leader types?

Background

There have been few studies to date on the role(s) of the superintendent in curriculum and instructional matters (Henry and Murphy, 1993). Thus, the literature offers only limited descriptions of superintendents' beliefs about their role as instructional leaders and how they put those beliefs into practice their school districts. Murphy (1989) noted that superintendents spent the majority of time on issues not related to curriculum and instruction. He concluded that instructional leadership at the district level was managed more by default than by design. Hauglund (1987) found that superintendents ranked curriculum development as a top priority, but then correspondingly ranked it low in terms of how they actually spent their time. Hannaway and Sproull (1978), Willower and Fraser, (1980), and Wimpelberg (1988) have reported similar findings.

Despite the managerial activity trap that ensnares all but the saviest of administrators, superintendents are still looked to for leadership in curriculum and instruction. Cuban (1984) concluded that school improvement could not be achieved without a high level of curriculum and instruction involvement on the part of superintendents. Empirical, theoretical, and professional literature contains suggestions for superintendents to become more involved in curriculum and instruction, the 'technical core' of school

(Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger, 1987; Murphy and Hallinger, 1988; Wimpelberg, 1988; Bjork, 1990; and Hord, 1990). Peterson and Finn (1985) noted that it was rare to encounter a "high achieving school system with a low performance superintendent" (p. 42) in the area of curriculum and instructional involvement. However, the work place realities for most superintendents is closer to the following characterization. "We're hired for our ideas on curriculum and fired for ones on finance."

Though there are discrepancies between what superintendents say is important and what they actually spend their time doing, superintendents' perspectives on their work are crucial to understanding the relationships between leadership and educational outcomes. Based on the tension suggested in this set of conflicting role expectations and apparent contradictions between what superintendents say is a top leadership priority and what they actually do, this investigation sought to assess these sources of tension and paradoxes by gathering baseline empirical data on superintendents' descriptions of their involvement in curriculum and instruction in one state.

Description of Data Sources

Based on findings from an interview study of 30 superintendents in the state (Faber, 1994), a three-page written questionnaire was developed (Bredeson and Faber, 1994). The written survey was piloted, and after refinements were made, it was mailed to the remaining 397 superintendents in the state who had not participated in the interview study. After one month, a second mailing was sent to all nonrespondents. A total of 326 responses (82.1% of the 397 mailed surveys) were returned for analysis. The completed questionnaires represented responses from 76.3% of all superintendents in the state.

The three-page questionnaire included four types of survey items: (1) demographic information from respondent superintendents (such as age, years of experience, degrees held, and district enrollment); (2) six open-ended questions that asked respondents to describe the most important things they do as superintendents, to list the tasks for which their school boards hold them accountable, and to describe the most important things they do in curriculum

development and instructional leadership; (3) Likert scaled queries that included such items as level of involvement in curriculum development, satisfaction with that involvement, and relative importance of the role expectations others have for the superintendent instructional leadership; and (4) six rank-order items including several rankings of administrative tasks by importance, by amount of time spent on the task, and rankings of primary sources of information and professional development. Responses to these survey items provided a comprehensive description of superintendents' work priorities as well as self-reports of their involvement in curriculum and instructional activities in the state.

Data Analysis

The three-page questionnaire provided quantitative and qualitative data describing superintendents' work and detailing what superintendents meant when they said they were involved in instructional leadership and curriculum development. Quantitative data included frequency data, rank-order data, and interval level (Likert scaled) items. These data permitted descriptive analyses, correlation analysis, and one-way analyses of variance. The survey also included six open-ended questions. The written responses from 326 superintendents were coded and transcribed into data files by question for further analysis. The responses to these six items yielded a total 102 single-spaced, typewritten pages of respondent data. Nominal counts of written responses were completed. Next, a constant comparative method of data analysis was employed to identify major themes describing the work of superintendents, to develop categories describing superintendents' instructional role, and to classify each respondent by one of four instructional role types. The triangulation of numeric and narrative data provided me with an excellent opportunity to address the major research questions by combining the richness and rigors of quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

A major consideration in the design of this investigation was to provide structural corroboration through the use of multiple survey items in the questionnaire. One purpose in gathering these data was to better understand

superintendents' views of their work, especially in the areas of instructional leadership and curriculum development. I believed that being able to triangulate responses from multiple survey items would provide greater detail in my descriptions, establish credibility and external reliability (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982), and provide strong evidence for any assertions made. For example, the issue of superintendents' work priorities was informed by responses to the following four survey items: (1) What are the three most important things you do as a superintendent? (2) List the three most important responsibilities your school board holds you accountable for in your yearly performance review and evaluation. (3) Research has identified five critically important things superintendents do as leaders in their districts. Rank order (1 = highest priority and 5 = lowest priority) the following in terms of your own priorities in carrying out your role as superintendent. (4) Finally, each superintendent was asked to rank order nine administrative tasks in two ways: by importance of the task and by actual amount of time the superintendent spent on each task area. Responses to these four survey items provided a constellation of data to describe the work role priorities of school superintendents.

FINDINGS

A Descriptive Profile of Respondents

The 326 superintendents who responded to this survey mirror the group characteristics described in national surveys. The superintendency continues to be dominated by males (N = 303, 93.5% in this sample). Because of school district consolidation over the past decade, national data indicate that women superintendents are employed in more populous school districts (8.4%). Female superintendents represent 6.6% of all district administrators (Glass, 1992). Thus, it is not surprising in this state dominated by consolidated rural school districts that females represent only 6.5% (n = 21) of all superintendents. In this study the average school district enrollment for the 326 school districts represented was 1,252 students (K-12). Men superintendents on average had 10.4 years of experience as district administrators, while women superintendents on average had significantly fewer

years (4.9 years) of administrative experience ($F = 6.58$, $p = .002$).

The Work of School Superintendents

Superintendents' descriptions of their involvement in curriculum development and instructional leadership activities need to be viewed within the broader context of how they define their leadership role in the district in general and what they see as priorities among competing work role demands. Superintendents were asked, "What are the most important things you do as a superintendent?" A total of 1,021 items were listed by the 326 respondents. Table 1 is a display of what superintendents report are their most important responsibilities.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Nine major tasks areas emerged from a constant comparative analysis of individual responses. The most frequently cited task area was Budget and Finances (18.3%). Communications (15.8%), Personnel Administration (13.5%), and Work with the School Board (12.3%) were the next most mentioned administrative responsibilities. Completing the list were Leadership and Vision (10.7%), Instructional Leadership (10.2%), General System Management (9.6%), Working with Staff (5.5%), and Planning (4.1%).

Superintendents were also asked to rank order nine administrative task areas by importance of task (1 = most important to 9 = least important) and by the amount of time spent on each (1 = most time spent to 9 = least time spent). The nine task areas for superintendents had been identified by researchers in earlier studies, however, they do not correspond perfectly to the nine tasks areas that emerged from the analysis of open-ended responses described above. Nevertheless, the rankings do provide additional evidence describing superintendents' work priorities. Table 2 indicates the mean rank order of tasks by perceived importance.

[INSERT TABLES 2 AND 3 HERE]

Table 3 displays the mean rank order of tasks by the amount of time superintendents actually spent on each. Budget ($X = 3.233$) was ranked as the most important administrative task as well as the most time consuming administrative responsibility ($X = 2.657$). The rank order of the other eight

tasks by importance (Table 2) were (2) Planning and Goals Formulation (X = 3.990), (3) Public/Community Relations (X = 4.341), (4) Curriculum and Instructional Leadership (X = 4.356), (5) Personnel Administration (X = 4.502), (6) Professional Growth and Staff Development (X = 5.748), (7) School Board Relations/Training (X = 5.877), (8) Legal/Political Issues (X = 6.370), and least important (9) Facilities Management (X = 6.500). The mean rank order from most time to least time of these same nine administrative tasks were (1) Budget and School Finance X = 2.657, (2) Personnel Administration (X = 3.500), (3) Community/Public Relations (X = 4.557), (4) Facilities Management (X = 5.072), (5) Legal/Political Issues (X = 5.362), (6) Planning and Goals Formulation (X = 5.669), (7) Curriculum and Instructional Leadership (X = 5.673), (8) School Board Relations/Training (X = 5.754), and (9) Professional Growth and Staff Development (X = 6.725).

When the two sets of rankings are compared some interesting differences are evident. Facilities Management ranked least important was the fourth most time-consuming task area (X = 5.072) for these superintendents. Legal/Political Issues ranked eighth by importance was fifth in amount of time spent on it. Curriculum and Instructional Leadership was ranked fourth most important but fell to seventh place in terms of the amount of time superintendents spent on it. The differences between what superintendent say is important and how they actually spend their time creates role conflict and tension for superintendents. The findings in this investigation support those of other researchers (Hauglund, 1987; Hannaway and Sproull, 1978; and Willower and Fraser, 1980). These superintendents believed curriculum development and instructional leadership was an important administrative responsibility (ranked fourth by importance), but they were unable to spend adequate time on it (ranked seventh by amount of time spent).

Curriculum Development and Instructional Leadership

Next, superintendents were asked to respond to the following survey item. "Among the various responsibilities of superintendents is instructional leadership. What are the most important things you do as superintendent in

the area of curriculum development and instructional leadership?" The 326 superintendents generated a total of 708 items in response to this question. Eight respondents left the survey item unanswered. Employing constant comparative data analysis, I identified four primary roles that superintendents carry out as leaders of curriculum and instruction in their districts. Table 4 is a summary of these data.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Instructional support (37.4%) was the most frequently listed set of responsibilities. Superintendents worked in the area of curriculum and instruction by providing financial, personnel, and material resources, logistical system support, and psychological support and encouragement. *Instructional collaboration* (21.8%) was the second most important responsibility they described. Instructional collaboration included superintendents who rolled up their sleeves to become personally involved in meetings and work groups to plan, design, and implement curriculum and instructional work. They participated in meetings and on work teams to help plan, design, implement, and assess instructional programs and their outcomes for students. *Instructional delegation* (21.6%) was a third theme. In this role, superintendents were distant from hands-on personal involvement in the area of curriculum development and instructional leadership. In general they viewed their role as system administrators who made it possible for others (teachers, principals, and directors of instruction) to carry out and be successful instructional leaders. They monitored activities, kept the school board apprised of important issues, coordinated district processes, "hired good people" to do curriculum and instruction work and "let them carry the ball." A fourth theme centered on *instructional vision and purpose* (19.2%). These were superintendents who described their role as visionary leaders who "painted pictures" and "allowed dreamers' dreams to come true," who kept the focus and purpose of their work and the work of others on students and learning outcomes, and who had a personal and professional stake and interest in teaching and learning.

Instructional Visionaries, Collaborators, Supporters, and Delegators

Next, I used the four role types that emerged from the 708 aggregated responses to categorize each of 326 superintendents. Based on the open-ended responses of each respondent describing his/her primary tasks and responsibilities in the area in curriculum development and instructional leadership, superintendents were categorized as one of four instructional types -- Instructional Visionary (N = 40, 12.5%), Instructional Collaborator (N = 81, 25.4%), Instructional Supporter (N = 115, 36.1%), or Instructional Delegator (N = 83, 26.0%). Because of inadequate data from eight respondents, a total of 319 superintendents were classified into one of four instructional role types. Table 5 is a display of the instructional role types.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

The classification of respondent by instructional role type was important as an organizer to describe superintendents' work preferences in the areas of instructional leadership and curriculum development and to provide factor levels for further quantitative data analysis. Despite these important analytical considerations, the four instructional roles should not be interpreted as "pure" administrative types. There are overlaps in superintendents' roles in carrying out instructional leadership responsibilities. Situational context and the complexities of instructional leadership in school districts require superintendents to be versatile administrators who provide vision, collaborate, delegate, and support as appropriate. They are not managers slavishly tethered to the characteristics of any one pure administrative type. The categories are heuristic and interpretive, not rigid role prescriptions.

Instructional Role and Administrative Priorities

Using a list of administrative tasks identified in previous studies of the school superintendency, respondents were asked to rank nine work tasks by importance of task and by the actual amount of time they spent on each. Because these rankings are ordinal level data, there are limitations in the inferences that can be made to the population. Nevertheless, the mean rankings of each task displayed in Tables 2 and 3 are vivid descriptions of

superintendents' perceptions of work priorities and demands.

Next, I was interested in knowing whether the four instructional role types identified in Table 5 differed in their rankings of the nine administrative tasks. In the previous section I reported the rank order data by numeric mean. It is important to point out that when rankings (ordinal data) are reported as arithmetic means (interval level data) the researcher has violated a major assumption about the population and its characteristics. Further, the use of rank-order means in parametric tests of differences (one-way analysis of variance) among instructional leader types violates the assumption of interval data, and thus the findings must be viewed with these limitations. With this caveat, the findings I report are tentative, nevertheless they suggest important differences among instructional visionaries, supporters, collaborators, and delegators.

There were significant differences among instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators in their rankings of administrative tasks by importance. Significant differences ($p < .01$) are reported in Table 6 in mean rankings of Facilities Management ($F = 5.83$, $p = .001$), Planning and Goals Formulation ($F = 3.99$, $p = .008$), Budget and Finances ($F = 4.19$, $p = .006$), and Curriculum and Instructional Leadership ($F = 5.16$, $p = .002$). An examination of the mean rankings for each reveals the differences among instructional role types and their perception of the importance of particular administrative tasks. In Table 7 the mean ranks of administrative tasks by the amount of time spent on each are reported. Using a confidence level of $p < .01$, there is a significant difference among instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators in the amount of time they report spending on Curriculum and Instructional Leadership ($F = 3.92$, $p = .009$). The average rankings of Instructional Visionaries ($X = 5.154$) and Instructional Collaborators ($X = 5.145$) indicate that they spend more time on curriculum and instructional tasks than do Instructional Supporters ($X = 5.856$) and Instructional Delegators ($X = 6.203$).

Help Wanted

The literature suggests that superintendents suffer from the "busy

person syndrome." They have more to do than they can realistically hope to accomplish in a normal work day. With this in mind, I asked superintendents the following question. "If you could hire an assistant to whom you could delegate specific tasks, what type of an assistant would you hire and why?" Table 9 is a summary of the responses to this query.

INSERT TABLE 9 HERE

Given the overwhelming number of administrative responsibilities assigned to superintendents and the time required to deal effectively with each, it is not surprising that these superintendents most wanted a general administrative assistant (N = 111, 31.4%). Earlier I reported that the average student enrollment (K-12) in the 326 districts was 1,252 students. These superintendents simply wanted someone to help shoulder the work load. In small districts with few administrative colleagues to whom they could delegate specific tasks, these superintendents were experiencing role overload -- too much to do with too little time and support. The second most mentioned assistant was one to work in the area of curriculum and instruction (N = 89, 25.1%). Assistants for business management (N = 68, 19.2%) and personnel administration (N = 24, 6.8%) were the next most desired administrative assistants. These top four types of assistants accounted for nearly 90 percent of responses.

Evaluation of Superintendents' Work

Finally, I asked superintendents to list the three most important responsibilities their school board held them accountable for in their yearly performance review and evaluation. Table 10 is a summary of the responses.

INSERT TABLE 10

A total of 972 items were listed in response to this survey item. Content analysis of the open-ended responses indicated once again that Budget and Finances, which accounted for nearly 25 percent of all responses, was the most frequently cited responsibility for which superintendents believe were are held accountable for by their school boards (N = 242, 24.9%). Communications/Public Relations (N = 175, 18.0%), Personnel Administration (N = 154, 15.8%), and General System Administration and Management (N = 107,

11.0%) were listed as the next most important responsibilities affecting superintendents' annual performance reviews. Together these four responsibilities accounted for approximately 70 percent of all items. Instructional Leadership (N = 79, 8.1%), Work with the School Board/Policy Work (N = 60, 6.2%), Climate/Culture/Staff Relations (N = 56, 5.6%), Leadership-Vision and Purpose (N = 41, 4.2%), District Goal Attainment (N = 35, 3.6%), and Planning (N = 23, 2.4%) were other important responsibilities described by superintendents.

The expectations of others also shaped superintendents' views of the role as leaders in the areas of curriculum development and instruction. These findings are presented in Table 8.

INSERT TABLE 8

Clearly, superintendents are expected to be instructional leaders in their districts. As chief executive/educational officers in their districts, superintendents indicate that their school boards have the highest expectations for them as instructional leaders.($\bar{X}$ = 4.09) while superintendents reported a mean level of expectation ($\bar{X}$ = 3.68) by teachers. Further analysis of these data indicates a negative relationship between years of administrative experience and teachers' expectations of superintendents ($r = -.213$). That is, the longer a superintendent has been an administrator the less likely teachers in the district expect her/him to be an instructional leader. One-way analysis of variance reveals significant differences ($p < .01$) among instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporter, and delegators and their perception of others' expectations for instructional leadership in their districts. Table 11 displays these findings.

INSERT TABLE 11

Instructional visionaries report the highest mean expectations ratings for school board members, principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Instructional delegators reported the lowest mean expectations ratings for these five groups.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To better understand the role of superintendents in the areas of

curriculum development and instructional leadership, I first asked these respondents to describe their administrative work. Tasks involving budgets and school finance dominate the work of school superintendents. Budget and School Finance was described as superintendents' top administrative task in terms of its importance, the amount of time superintendents spent on it, what superintendents described as the most important thing they do as administrators, and superintendents' perceptions of what their school boards held them accountable for in annual performance reviews. The next most important administrative tasks were Communications/Public Relations and Personnel Administration. Instructional leadership tasks were described as important, the sixth most important task described in open-ended responses, but typically curriculum and instruction were not described by superintendents as a primary administrative responsibility.

When data describing what superintendents said was important was compared to data describing how much time they spenT on particular administrative tasks, there were discrepancies. For example, superintendents ranked curriculum and instructional leadership tasks fourth by importance. However, these same tasks dropped to seventh place based on the actual amount of time they spent on curriculum and instruction activities. Personnel administration, which was ranked as the fifth most important administrative task, was the second most time consuming responsibility for these superintendents. Finally, facilities management was ranked ninth out of nine by its importance, however, in these districts it was the fourth most time consuming administrative task.

With these descriptions of superintendents' administrative work, superintendents then described what they viewed as major responsibilities in the areas of curriculum development and instructional leadership. Four major themes emerged from analysis of responses to open-ended questions. When superintendents described their involvement in curriculum development and instruction, they listed instructional support (material, financial, and psychological), instructional collaboration, general administration, and instructional vision as their major contributions. Next, the open-ended

responses of 319 superintendents were analyzed and each superintendent was placed in one of four instructional role types -- visionary, collaborator, supporter, and delegator. Instructional supporters and delegators accounted for 62.1% of all respondents. Slightly over one quarter of the superintendents described their involvement in curriculum in terms of collaboration, while 12.5% described their role as instructional visionaries.

Next, quantitative analyses indicated significant differences among instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators. In terms of superintendents' perceptions of others' expectations of them in the area of curriculum development and instructional leadership, significant differences were reported in mean expectations for school boards, principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Instructional visionaries reported the highest mean expectations among these groups. Instructional delegators reported the lowest mean expectations among these groups. In addition, there were significant differences among these four instruction role types ($F = 3.56$, $p = .015$). Instructional visionaries had significantly fewer years of administrative experience (7.8 years) and than did instructional delegators (12.0 years).

Instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators also differed significantly in their average rankings of the importance of Facilities Management, Planning and Goal Formulation, Budget and School Finance, and Curriculum and Instructional Leadership ($p < .01$). Significant differences were also reported among these four instructional types in terms of the amount of time each spent on curriculum and instruction activities ($p = .002$). Instructional visionaries reported spending significantly more time than instructional delegators and instructional supporters on curriculum and instruction tasks.

Superintendents' work role priorities reflect a responsiveness to their employer's criteria for evaluation of their administrative effectiveness. Analysis of open-ended responses indicated that superintendents believed their school boards primarily evaluated their administrative effectiveness based on their success in the areas of budget and school finance, communications and

public relations, personnel administration, and general system administration. Effectiveness in the area of curriculum and instructional leadership was the fifth most cited responsibility mentioned.

Finally, the responses of these superintendents suggest that they are suffering from role overload. Education is becoming an increasingly complex and demanding profession. As administrators they report tension between what they believe is important administrative work and what they are actually able to spend their time doing. Given the demands of their daily work, they would hire general administrative assistants, directors of curriculum and instruction, and business managers if they had the opportunity to hire administrative support personnel.

CONCLUSION

Combining quantitative and qualitative survey data permitted me to look in depth and broadly in terms of superintendents' involvement in curriculum development and instructional leadership. The superintendents in this study described their role in curriculum development as one primarily grounded in facilitation, support, and delegation of the work to others. Four major instructional leadership roles emerged from these data. They are instructional visionary, instructional collaborator, instructional supporter, and instructional delegator.

The findings describing superintendents' daily work and administrative priorities support Murphy (1989) and Henry and Murphy's (1993) conclusions that most superintendents spend little time in curriculum development. Time constraints, role overload, the press of other priorities, and lack of personal interest in curriculum and instruction tended to confine the majority of superintendents to collaboration, support, and delegation as their major types of involvement in curriculum development in their districts.

These findings also support previous findings in the literature which point to the discrepancy between what superintendents say is important (curriculum development) and how much time they actually dedicate to this important responsibility. This can be explained in part by the complexity of the superintendent's administrative role. The findings strongly suggest that

superintendents respond to role expectations within their districts. Since they are primarily held accountable for managerial processes rather than teaching and learning outcomes, that is where they choose to spend their time. Because most school board members are laypersons, they feel more comfortable discussing budgets, personnel matters, and facilities than deliberating over curriculum and instruction issues. Given local priorities, criteria for performance evaluation, and school board interest, it is not surprising that superintendents delegate curriculum development work to others.

There were differences in how instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators viewed their work and perceived what others expected of them in the area of curriculum development and instructional leadership. It is possible that these findings are a bit of a "chicken and egg" finding. Since school boards hire superintendents, it is likely that the administrators they employ reflect their preferences. School boards that have strong interests in curriculum and instructional issues hire instructional visionaries and collaborators. Whereas, school boards that are dominated by laypersons who believe budgets, buses, and basketball floors are district priorities may be less likely to recruit and select instructional visionaries and collaborators. Regardless of how superintendents have come into their administrative positions, they can influence the views of school board members and others by demonstrating interest and attention to teaching and learning and viewing curriculum development as a primary administrative responsibility. This is the leadership role that instructional visionaries have taken on in their districts.

School boards also need to do more to recognize and reward curricular leadership by superintendents. Clearly superintendents respond to the criteria their local boards use to evaluate administrator effectiveness. As one 35-year administrator veteran once told me, "We're hired for our ideas on curriculum and we're fired for ones on finance." Finally, administrator preparation programs also can contribute to more proactive instructional leadership by superintendents. Shifting the content of educational administration courses from managerial emphases to teaching and learning as

their primary leadership responsibility would prepare future superintendents to be curriculum leaders in their districts. This is not an argument for transforming superintendents into directors of curriculum and instruction. However, it is one for returning superintendents to the core of the educational enterprise, teaching and learning. If curriculum development is truly the heart of what we do in education, then superintendents would chose to delegate many other tasks while they spent the majority of their time in curriculum development and instructional leadership.

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Table 1
Superintendents' Most Important Administrative Tasks

Administrative Task	Rank	Number of Items Listed for Category	Percent of Total Tasks Listed
Budget and Finances	1	187	18.3
Communications/Public Relations	2	161	15.8
Personnel Administration	3	138	13.5
Work with School Board	4	126	12.3
Leadership/Vision/Purposing	5	109	10.7
Instructional Leadership & Curriculum Development	6	104	10.2
General System Administration	7	98	9.6
Work the Staff/Others	8	56	5.5
Planning	9	42	4.1
Total Number of Items Listed		1,021	

Table 2
Mean Rank Order of Administrative Tasks by Importance

Task	(N)	Mean Rank	Rank Order 1 = most important 9 = least important
Budget & School Finance	309	3.233	1
Planning & Goals Formulation	310	3.990	2
Community/Public Relations	308	4.341	3
Curriculum & Instructional Leadership	309	4.356	4
Personnel Administrative	309	4.502	5
Professional Growth & Staff Development	309	5.748	7
School Board Relations/Training	308	5.877	7
Legal/Political Issues	308	6.370	8
Facilities Management	308	6.500	9

Table 3
Mean Rank Order of Administrative Tasks By Amount of Time Spent

Tasks	(N)	Mean Rank	Rank Order 1 = most time spent 9 = least time spent
Budget & School Finance	306	2.657	1
Personnel Administration	306	3.500	2
Community/Public Relations	307	4.557	3
Facilities Management	305	5.072	4
Legal/Political Issues	304	5.362	5
Planning & Goals Formulation	305	5.669	6
Curriculum & Instructional Leadership	306	5.673	7
School Board Relations/Training	305	5.754	8
Professional Growth & Staff Development	306	6.725	9

Table 4
Tasks of Curriculum Development and Instructional Leadership*

	(N)	Percent of Total Items Listed
Instructional Vision/Purposing/Leadership	136	19.2
Instructional Collaboration	154	21.8
Instructional Support and Facilitation	265	37.4
General Administration/Delegation of Tasks	153	21.6

*N = 708 total items generated as most important tasks of superintendents in area of curriculum development and instructional leadership.

Table 5
Instructional Role Types

	(N)	Percent of Total Respondents
Instructional Visionary	40	12.5
Instructional Collaborator	81	25.4
Instructional Supporter	115	36.1
Instructional Delegator	83	26.0
TOTAL	319	100.0

* 8 respondents of 326 provided inadequate data for classification.

Table 6
Mean Ranks of Administrative Tasks By Importance*

Administrative Task	Instructional Role Types				F	P-Value
	Leader	Collaborator	Supporter	Delegator		
Community/Public Relations	4.632	4.273	4.472	4.167	.51	.673
Facilities Management**	7.342	6.805	6.547	5.744	5.83	.001
Personnel Administration	4.789	4.623	4.311	4.385	.64	.593
Planning & Goals Formulation**	3.692	3.662	3.792	4.782	3.99	.008
Budget & Finance**	4.079	3.325	3.311	2.679	4.19	.006
Curriculum & Instructional Leadership**	3.641	3.896	4.349	5.205	5.16	.002
Professional Growth & Staff Development	5.590	5.545	5.642	6.256	1.58	.195
Legal/Political Issues	6.026	6.649	6.453	6.103	1.02	.382

School Board Relations/Training	5.026	6.221	6.057	5.615	1.83	.143
* 1 = most important; 9 = least important						
** significant difference p < .01						

Table 7
Mean Ranks of Administrative Tasks By Amount of Time Spent*

Administrative Task	Instructional Role Type				F	P-Value
	Leader	Collaborator	Supporter	Delegator		
Community/Public Relations	4.128	4.750	4.717	4.462	.80	.495
Facilities Management	6.026	5.164	5.052	4.614	2.99	.031
Personnel Administration	3.949	3.711	3.269	3.418	1.29	.278
Planning & Goals Formulation	5.256	5.368	5.641	6.089	1.93	.124
Budget & Finance	3.487	2.737	2.548	2.367	3.20	.024
Curriculum & Instructional Leadership**	5.154	5.145	5.856	6.203	3.92	.009
Professional Growth & Staff Development	6.590	6.447	6.663	7.076	1.63	.183
Legal/Political Issues	5.872	5.320	5.233	5.253	.64	.589
School Board Relations/Training	4.692	6.382	5.825	5.481	3.26	.022

* 1 = most time spent; 9 = least time spent

** significant difference $p < .01$

Table 8
Role Expectation for Superintendents to Be Instructional Leaders

Expectations of:	Number of Responses	Mean Level of Expectation*
School Board Members	325	4.09
School Principals	309	3.73

Teachers	325	3.68
Parents	324	3.84
Community	324	3.76
* 1 = expectations are very low; 5 = expectations are very high		

Table 9
Assistants Superintendents Would Hire

Type of Assistant	Number of Times Listed By Respondents	Percent of Total Items Listed
General Administrative Assistant	111	31.4
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	89	25.1
Business Management (Budget)	68	19.2
Personnel Director	24	6.8
Director for Supervision and Staff Development	16	4.5
Public Relations Director	16	4.5
Facilities Manager	14	4.0
Pupil Services Director	9	2.5
Director of Planning	4	1.1
Transportation Coordinator	3	less than 1%
N =	354	

Table 10
Superintendent Accountability to School Boards:
Their Most Important Responsibilities

Administrative Responsibility	Number of Times Listed	Percent of Total Items Listed
Budget & Finance	242	24.9
Communications/Public Relations	175	18.0
Personnel Administration	154	15.8
General System Administration & Management	107	11.0
Instructional Leadership	79	8.1
Work with School Board--Policy	60	6.2
Climate/Culture/Staff Relations	56	5.6
Leadership--Vision, Purpose	41	4.2
Accomplishment of District Goals	35	3.6
Planning	23	2.4
Total Number of Responsibilities Listed N =	972	

Table 11
Expectations for Superintendent Leadership in Curriculum and Instruction

Group	Instructional Roles (mean ratings)*				F	P-Value
	Visionary	Collaborator	Supporter	Delegator		
School Board	4.4359	4.1923	4.1667	3.8072	6.04	.001
Principals	4.2308	3.7778	3.6909	3.5000	6.35	.000
Teachers	4.0000	3.8205	3.6404	3.4819	3.50	.016
Parents	4.1579	3.8974	3.9561	3.5060	5.25	.002
Community Members	4.0000	3.8080	3.8950	3.4580	3.64	.013

* 1 = very low expectations; 5 = very high expectations